Unit .28

Session .04

Pursuing Godly Living

Scripture

2 Peter 1:3-11

3 His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. **4** By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. **5** For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, **6** knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, **7** godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. **8** For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. **10** Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. **11** For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

Intro Options

Main Point:
God has given us everything we need to live a godly life.

Option 1

Give each student one or more pieces of a large puzzle. Label the pieces beforehand (such as numbering) so you know exactly which pieces go where. Challenge the students to assemble a puzzle with the pieces face down on a large piece of cardboard or poster board. Guide them throughout the process, and help them to flip over the puzzle once they have completed it.

Discuss with your students the principles of trusting God and following His instructions for living a godly life, even when we cannot see the picture of what He is doing.

- **How is it comforting to know that God always see the full picture of our lives even when we don't?**

Option 2

If you have access to any propaganda posters, show them to students to give them an idea of what we mean by propaganda. Even if you don't, they probably know what they are.

Your students will be making Christian propaganda posters for their introductory activity. Give each student a sheet of paper. Have them count off by threes. Each group now has the following "theme;" they are to create posters for your church's hallways to "advertise" that theme:

- "Given Everything Required" (2 Peter 1:3-4)
- "Make Every Effort" (2 Peter 1:5-7)
- "Confirm Your Calling." (2 Peter 1:8-11)

If you want to, you can give them the passages in parenthesis to give them some context for their posters. Give them time to make their posters and then to let them share. See what common themes or ideas come up. Ask them if they would have connected these three slogans. If so, how? In today's lesson, we'll look at each theme and how they interweave for God's people. If you'd like, after the lesson, you can ask students how they would change their propaganda posters (or not) based on what they learned.

TEACHING PLAN

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4.

In today's world, it's hard to imagine going through a single day without our cell phones. But there's a problem. Our phones only last so long—batteries are drained, screens crack, apps stop working.

- **When have you felt frustrated because something you wanted to use wouldn't work?**

God has called us to live godly lives, but we know that we can't do it on our own. Trying to live for God by our own strength is a lot like asking our phones to work without batteries. Thankfully, God gives us "divine power" so that we might be able to fulfill our calling. The apostle Peter described how God works powerfully in His people, not only for salvation, but also to empower us to live godly lives that glorify Him. We access this power through our knowledge of Jesus. As we grow through spiritual maturity and experience His glory and goodness through Scripture, God opens our minds to understand who He is, and how He is at work in and through us. We can have incredible confidence in God—He not only saves His people but also generously supplies us with everything we need to live for Him.

- **How can you better appreciate what God has provided for your spiritual growth?**
- **How does your confidence in God translate into the ways you live for Him?**

Read 2 Peter 1:5-7.

God's people are to make "every effort" to live in ways that reflect Jesus. This is our calling when life is smooth and living for Jesus is relatively easy, as well as when life is difficult or when we may not feel like doing the right things, and even when we face persecution for living for Christ. We are to strive toward godliness in every aspect of our lives. This may seem impossible. Remember what Peter wrote just a few verses before: God's power enables us to live for Him.

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God has given us everything we need to live a godly life.

2 Peter

Humans are made in the very image of God (Gen. 1:27). However, every generation after Adam, due to his rebellion, has not inherited a nature capable of conforming to God's moral character, but instead a sinful one. No matter how hard we might try, we cannot escape the evil that inherently dwells within us. And the result is not just an occasional little sin here and there, but rather lives full of heinous and vile rebellion against God and wrongs done to one another. What a debilitating reality!

Jesus Christ entered as the second Adam into human history—the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-49), the perfect man. He is the only one who could turn this thing around for humanity and redeem a sinful people. Jesus, the perfect image Himself, was the only one who could restore the perfect image of God back into God's creation (Col. 1:15-19; 3:10). When Christ, though perfect in every, way was slaughtered on a cross, He exchanged places with sinners—fully taking on our sin, that sinners would be set free from their sin nature.

"God has left nothing to chance. He knew He was calling messy sinners to Himself, and so He has given us all things that "pertain to life and godliness" by the "divine power" that comes through "the knowledge of" (i.e., an informed relationship with) Jesus our Lord (v. 3). In Christ we have everything we need to live a life that honors God. But how? How do we live such a life, given our proclivity toward sin and failure and the tendency of our hearts to wander? Peter tells us it is through the precious and very great promises of God that believers become "partakers of the divine nature" (v. 4)."[1]

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 40, DDG)

Sanctification

After we are justified by faith, declared to be in right standing with God through the righteousness of Christ, we undergo a lifetime of sanctification where we are continually made more like Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26; 2 Thess. 2:13). Scripture speaks of sanctification as a present position (we have already been sanctified) and as a continuing process. Sanctification affects the whole of a person, transforming one's heart, mind, and character to reflect that of Jesus.

TEACHING PLAN

We are not in this alone. On the other hand, we can't expect to look like Jesus with a passive faith. We are saved and sanctified by grace, but effort is required as well—not to earn God's favor, but as the expression and evidence of genuine faith that we have indeed received that favor. The same grace that saves is the grace that enables our efforts to grow in holiness.

This godliness isn't the end in itself. Rather, we are to be driven in all we do by a love for God and love for one another. True godliness will always result in real-life expressions of love for others. We should always be looking for ways to share the love of Jesus by unselfishly and sacrificially meeting practical needs.

- **How would you describe the relationship between God's grace and our effort?**
- **Why is love for others so important?**

Read 2 Peter 1:8-11.

When God's people live in a way that fails to reflect His qualities before a watching world, they obscure that which we exist for: to make much of Him. It's as if they are literally blind to the grace of God available through the forgiveness of sins. If we do not strive to live like Jesus in every aspect of life, we will miss the lessons that come from growing in godliness.

When believers fail to live for God, it's as if they've forgotten their past sins and the deserved punishment. Peter used strong language when he said that a lack of fruitfulness is the equivalent to being useless. We were created to display His character. Therefore, we should make every effort to confirm and display our relationship with Christ.

Godly living allows us to experience the peace and joy Jesus purchased for us. Further, we fulfill our purpose of helping others to see the beauty of Christ, and bringing God the glory He rightly deserves.

- **In what areas of your life is God calling you to be more fruitful?**
- **How do you see your pursuit of a godly life pointing others to Christ?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God has given us everything we need to live a godly life.

2 Peter 1

"The logical relationship between verses 3-4 and verses 5-7 is crucial. Verses 5-7 summon the readers to a life of virtue, but verses 3-4 remind us that a life of godliness is rooted in and dependent upon God's grace. Believers should live in a way that pleases God because Christ has given them everything they need for life and godliness. The indicative of God's gift precedes and strengthens the imperative that calls for human exertion. Peter did not lapse, therefore, into a works based righteousness here since he grounded his exhortations in God's merciful gifts. The striking feature in these verses is the chain of eight virtues. It does seem significant that the chain begins with faith and ends with love. Faith is the root of all the virtues, and love is the goal and climax of the Christian life. Otherwise, we should not press the order of the virtues listed, nor should we think Peter encouraged his readers to work first on one virtue before moving to the next one."[2]

"The calling of all those who come to faith is certain, but those who consistently add good works to the sacraments of faith which they have received are the ones who make their calling and election certain in the eyes of those who observe them. The opposite is also true, for those who go back to their crimes—after they have been called—and who die in their sins make it clear to everyone that they are damned."[3]

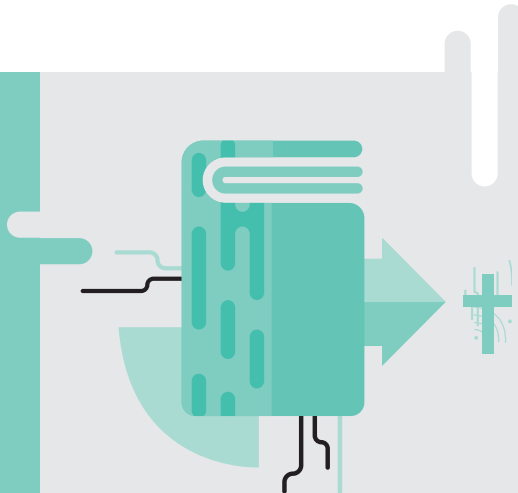
Activity

Alone or in pairs, your students will draw comics (one to four panels) showing a Christian doing an example of godly living; it could be serving on a mission trip, praying with his or her family, witnessing in school, giving his or her best at athletic practice, anything that is done in faith to honor Jesus (bonus points if the comic incorporates some of the virtues in 2 Peter 1:5-7).

Here's the trick: when they make their drawings, they should label different parts of the comics with points from the lesson. Let students prepare and then show their "godly living diagrams." Discuss how they can pursue godly living this week, both as individuals and as a group, and how the three points of the lesson will apply to those pursuits.

(p. 42, DDG) Christ Connection

Jesus fully obeyed the Father and died the death we deserved because of our sin. When we trust in Jesus, our sin is forgiven and removed from us and we receive His righteousness in its place. Because of what Jesus has done, we can live in obedience, pleasing God and reflecting our new identity in Christ.



PURSUING GODLY LIVING

God has given us everything we need to live a godly life.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus fully obeyed the Father and died the death we deserve because of our sin. When we trust in Jesus, He forgives our sin and grants us His own perfection, making us right with God. As a result, we are able to reflect Jesus in the way we live as we obey God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

STEWARDSHIP – Using the gifts God has given me wisely, without wasting them.

HEAD

Fill in the blanks: God's divine power has given us everything required for _____ and

_____ through the _____ of Him.

What will we be guarded from if we increasingly grow in faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, gentleness, brotherly affection and love?

HEART

Since Jesus gave us His perfection in exchange for our sin, as well as gifts and talents to use for Him, how should we see and use those gifts?

Peter says to “make every effort” to live God’s way using God’s strength so we will not stumble and prove our faith is real. What would it look like not to make every effort? What would a good steward do instead?

HANDS

Write a list of specific gifts God has given you below. They could be natural talents (creative, artistic, musical, scientific, good with numbers, building, organizing, etc.) or qualities (friendly, positive, compassionate, peace-maker, giving, etc). Pick one of your gifts and write down two ways you could use it in a way that reflects God to others.